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INFORMATION TEAM HELPS LAUNCH FARM BILL

When Secretary John R. Block strode up to the platform in USDA's news conference room in Washington shortly after 10 a.m. Feb. 22 to announce the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1985, a host of people from USDA's Office of Information were up there with him, at least in spirit.

There were the Design Division artists who saw to it that the descriptive charts used in the presentation were prepared.

There were the Photography Division staffers who had suggested some sort of visuals be used in the presentation and invited a host of photographers.

There were the Radio & Television Division people who were nervously wondering if the Secretary would arrive on time because live coverage began promptly at 10 a.m. He arrived less than a minute later.

There were the News Division people who handled many details before, during and after the news conference, responding to and serving a horde of reporters.

There were the Video & Film Division folks who had to play catch-up with videotape because the news conference opened 15 minutes before they had access to a satellite. Somehow the information folks also were able to handle a Q&A session live through the satellite facilities from 11 to 11:45 a.m.

There were the printers in the Publishing Division who saw to it that 1500 copies of an explanation of AAA 1985 were printed over the preceding weekend.

There also were the Radio & TV Division people who set up a special news line to provide actuality material for farm broadcasters.

The conference developed a lot of news. It was said to have set a record for coverage: 19 television cameras, an uncounted swarm of radio microphones, 40 radio stations and networks on a live telephone hookup and at least 21 television stations on a live Q&A session via satellite, not to mention the many print media and newswire services.

AUBURN SEEKS TELEVISION SPECIALIST

Auburn University in Alabama is looking for an information specialist-television to write and produce video news material and public service announcements. The cut-off date for applications was Feb. 8, but Jack Smith, coordinator of Mass Media, Information Services, says the deadline has been extended indefinitely.

The candidate should have a master's degree, but a doctorate is desirable.

Contact James L. Smith, Head, Personnel and Staff Development, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service, Auburn University, AL 36849. His telephone number is (206) 826-5323; or make contact through Extension Information's Dialcom electronic mailbox AGS101.

4-H COUNCIL NEEDS PRINT MEDIA COORDINATOR

The National 4-H Council is searching for candidates to fill a vacancy of print media coordinator in the Communications Division at the Chevy Chase, Maryland, headquarters.

The media coordinator helps with a comprehensive communications program to support the mission of the National 4-H Council by providing communications and public relations support for broad 4-H visibility and Council-supported programs and services. The incumbent's concentration will be on newspapers, magazines and special interest publications.

A bachelor's degree in communications/public relations with emphasis on journalism, writing and editing is required. A minimum of five years of experience in print media or public relations work, or related experience with Extension information, also is required. Some supervisory experience and ability to handle a 35mm camera are desirable.

Deadline for applications was March 1, but anyone interested should get in touch immediately with Larry L. Krug, Director of Communications, National 4-H Council, 7100 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. His telephone number is (301) 656-9000.

DIAL-A-WEED PUBLICATION POISED FOR USE

You say you've got a weed out in your yard that seems to threaten your health (other than give you a backache pulling it out) and you want to know more about it?

Just swing to your handy microcomputer, conjure up the USDA Extension Service "Menu" on the ITT Dialcom system, and ask for EXTPUBS. Look for "Weeds That Affect Human Health," ES-EP-1, for an abstract.

Then tap out EXTMS for the full manuscript. You will have now received USDA's first electronic publication. No printed versions are available, except at the requesting terminals, of course.

A year ago in EXTENSION REVIEW magazine, Pat Loudon, public affairs specialist with USDA's Extension Service, predicted this would happen. She explains more about this publication and other electronic subjects in an article entitled "Are Printed Publications Passe'?"

She'll send you a copy of the magazine if you contact her (electronically, of course) at AGS096, or by telephone at (202) 447-6133.

FNS DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION NAMED

Maria Falcone has been appointed director of the Office of Governmental Affairs and Public Information for USDA's Food & Nutrition Service (FNS).

Falcone came to FNS from the Cooperative League of the USA, a trade association, where she was executive assistant to the president. Prior to that she served as a White House appointee in the Office of the Secretary at USDA, where she handled a wide range of agricultural policy and budget questions.

A native Washingtonian, Falcone served four years as legislative assistant to Sen. Richard G. Lugar of Indiana, where her responsibilities included agriculture, nutrition, health, the Federal budget and labor issues.

She holds a bachelor's degree from Dunbarton College and a master's degree in education from the University of Maryland.

APHIS INFORMATION STAFF CHANGE REPORTED

The Information Division of USDA's Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) was absorbed Feb. 11 into the newly-created Legislative & Public Affairs Staff, which now also includes the former policy communication and editorial staff and the legislative and intergovernmental affairs staff.

In describing the change, APHIS Administrator Bert W. Hawkins said the new arrangement is temporary until a more permanent realignment can be approved.

John Duncan, director of the policy communication and editorial staff, will head the new LPA and a task force working on recommendations for the future organization.

The policy communication and editorial staff was established three years ago to handle all controlled correspondence, to write testimony and to handle other projects, Duncan explained.

CHANGED USDA NEWSLETTER UNFOLDS

Take a tabloid-size newspaper page. Fold it in half from top to bottom. Then fold it in half again.

Now you have what USDA's new employee newsletter, USDA NEWS, will look like (after you open it from a self-mailer tri-fold).

USDA employees should get their first look at the new publication sometime in March, reports editor George Holcomb, with the Special Programs Division of USDA's Office of Information. Holcombe took over editing chores in the absence of Sharon Edwards, who is at home with her just-born son, James Alexander.

Holcomb says the first new issue will be heavy on how management reform will affect USDA employees, but will also report on farm credit, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1985 (the farm bill) and USDA's 1986 budget.

Actually, USDA NEWS is a new name for 'USDA', a newsletter of many years standing. There's also a new typeface and a special column on employees.

Holcomb is inviting information specialists in USDA agencies to channel articles, photos, letters, questions and comments to him at Room 536-A, Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or via Dialcom electronic mailbox AGR009.

By the way, circulation will probably increase. Secretary John R. Block has expressed a desire for each agency to try to reach each employee with a copy.

CLEMSON ASSESSES NONFARM MEDIA SHORT COURSE

Two days after his one-day short course, "Agriculture and the News," Danny McNeill, Extension Service editor at Clemson University in South Carolina, was assessing whether he'd try it again next year.

McNeill expressed his disappointment at the turnout--17 newspeople from newspapers, television stations and magazines inside and outside of South Carolina. McNeill remembers the city news people who did NOT show up.

Missing were some folks that McNeill thought needed the course most--from city media not well acquainted with agriculture. The course was designed for them.

The program included a movie, quick overviews of the crops grown in the Southeast, a quick overview of livestock raised in the Southeast, and then discussions on forestry, aquaculture, farm economics, support and stabilization programs, pesticides and the image of agriculture.

McNeill modelled his course after a successful venture like that in Virginia. It was his first such effort.

McNeill sent out questionnaires before the course and got 19 responses. He thought 25 or 30 would show up, especially some urban reporters that he "courted" actively.

He'll probably send out questionnaires again next year and assess the response.

Others who are considering such an event may wish to contact McNeill and then talk to Terry Canup at Virginia Tech who had a successful program last year.

McNeill can be reached at the Department of Agricultural Communications, Clemson University, Clemson, SC 29631, or Dialcom electronic mailbox AGS2100. Canup's address is Room 200, Media Building, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061, and he can be reached through Dialcom electronic mailbox AGS2418.

(Canup says that Barry Jones in Mississippi was successful with a similar event for publishers. We hope that Barry will accept this as an invitation to tell us how he did it; he wasn't in when we called, on deadline--John Crowley.)

PUBLICATIONS CONFERENCE SET

"Doing Better Publications for Less" is the tempting title of a conference scheduled for April 1 in San Francisco. It's put on by the Council of Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

Details are available from Lora Silsbee, CASE, Suite 400, 11 Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036.

Basically, it's a one-day conference but there's an early bird session on Sunday March 31 dealing with "Getting More from Your Student Recruitment Direct Mail Dollar."

INSIDE INFORMATION is published for distribution to public affairs and information staff members of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, its agencies, state departments of agriculture and land grant universities. Any items, comments and inquiries should be addressed to either John Crowley or Nancy Bevis, Office of Information, Room 536A, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250 or to AGR009 mailbox on the Dialcom system, or call (202) 447-7454.

